

News from Ed Markey

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NUCLEAR WEAPONS LAB SECURITY GUARD FORCE CUT BY 40%, MARKEY FINDS

**President Bush rejection of "urgent" supplemental DOE security funds
further imperils shaky security situation, says lawmaker**

Washington, D.C. -- Today Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA), a senior Member of the Energy and Commerce Committee and co-chair of the Bipartisan Task Force on Nonproliferation, released a report entitled "The Sum of All Fears: Security Gaps at Department of Energy (DOE) Nuclear Weapons Facilities." The report summarized more than 250 pages of materials provided to Rep. Markey by DOE in response to his January 23, 2002 letter to DOE Secretary Spencer Abraham regarding lax security at DOE nuclear weapons facilities such as Los Alamos National Laboratory, Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Center near Denver, and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

"The President is playing a dangerous game when he vetoes critical security resources as a strategy to revive the economy," said Markey. "Incredibly, the White House has twice refused to fund security activities described by the Secretary of Energy as 'urgent security needs.' It is clear that DOE has continued its long tradition of aggressive indifference to the security of its nuclear weapons facilities. Experts have told me that a group of suicidal terrorists could, once inside a nuclear weapons facility, quickly build and detonate a dirty bomb or a homemade nuclear bomb capable of achieving explosive critical yield. Instead of correcting problems identified by whistleblowers and numerous internal and external reviews, DOE has cut its guard forces by 40%, failed to permanently upgrade its security regulations almost a year after September 11, fired some key security experts, and provided misleading information to Congress and the public regarding the adequacy of security at its sites."

Ten DOE sites, some of which are located near urban areas such as Denver, Colorado and the Bay Area of California, contain enough weapons-grade plutonium (reportedly about 10 kg) and highly enriched uranium (reportedly about 50 kg) to build a crude nuclear bomb. In addition, the DOE Transportation Security Division regularly transports nuclear weapons materials on public highways from site to site. Recent press reports have detailed both Al Qaeda members' attempts to obtain nuclear materials as well as their desire to attack U.S. nuclear facilities.

The Markey report finds that:

- DOE reduced the numbers of security guards at nuclear facilities by nearly 40% in the past 10 years. At many sites, higher numbers of security guards authorized to carry arms and able to make arrests were cut than unarmed guards. Security guard forces at DOE labs contacted by Rep. Markey's staff indicated that unarmed guards are paid less than armed guards, have more limited promotion potential, and are not required to meet the same physical fitness standards.
- DOE has consistently told Congress, the press, and the public that there is no security problem, while simultaneously requesting more emergency funds from the White House to meet "urgent

security needs.” Despite the request, the White House has *twice* refused these funds. The White House failed to include the vast majority of these funds in its emergency request to Congress, and then on August 13, 2002, rejected more than \$300 million for DOE security that was provided by Congress in the Supplemental Appropriations bill.

- DOE Design Basis Threat security upgrades and implementation are taking too long to complete and are inadequate. Companies DOE has traditionally used to provide security threat assessment advice have recently been fired, leaving DOE with no tested expertise in this area.
- DOE admitted that two Yemeni citizens who participated in a DOE anti-terrorism training program disappeared in the U.S. after the program ended.
- DOE force-on-force security exercises have revealed security flaws, and DOE’s response contains inconsistencies.
- Successful cyber-attacks have taken place at DOE facilities, including numerous root-level compromises (which occur when a hacker is able to enter the computer system, and perhaps install viruses or software that would allow them to return to or damage the site). Seven root-level compromises were reported for Sandia New Mexico, 9 for Argonne National Laboratory, 16 at Lawrence Berkeley Lab, and 4 at Oak Ridge National Lab.
- Results of the Los Alamos Safeguards and Security Survey conducted by DOE in summer 2001 found security problems, despite limitations in what was reported.

“Based on the information that the Department of Energy has provided me about the state of security at its nuclear weapons facilities, I believe we continue to face an unacceptable level of risk that terrorists could successfully target these sites,” Rep. Markey concluded, adding, “Nearly a year after September 11th, we should not face such a sorry state of affairs.”

Copies of the Markey staff report, and the more than 250 pages of DOE materials upon which it was based, can be obtained at www.house.gov/markey.

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